

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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\*\*PRESS PREVIEW:  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1982  
10 A.M. to 3 P.M.

## MANET'S PARIS AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, D.C. September 28, 1982. Manet and Modern Paris, an exhibition of works by the French impressionist Édouard Manet and other artists of his time, marks the centenary of Manet's death in 1883. It is focused around their exploration of familiar aspects of Paris and its social life in the second half of the nineteenth century. It opens in the National Gallery of Art's East Building on December 5, 1982 and will remain on view through March 6, 1983.

Presented thematically, the exhibition explores scenes in and around Paris as portrayed by Manet, his predecessors, contemporaries, and followers. They date from a time when the modern city, and above all Paris, was being discovered by artists as an important source of subject matter and stylistic innovation, and modern art itself was being born. At the same time, the exhibition illustrates the remarkable changes that occurred in Manet's art from the early 1860s to the early 1880s.

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About one-hundred paintings, pastels, prints, and photographs have been selected from American and European collections, using examples in the National Gallery of Art and the private collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon as a starting point.

The works by Manet and his contemporaries will be grouped in nine sections illustrating characteristic features of the Parisian scene of the day: "The City Viewed," "The Railroad Station," "The Café and Café-Concert," "The Theater and the Opera," "Outside Paris: The Race Track," "Outside Paris: The Beach," "The Street as Public Theater," "The Street as Battleground," and "The Public Holiday." Together these groups of works offer an exciting panorama of Paris in the late nineteenth century.

The Gare Saint-Lazare, the busiest railroad station in Paris, was frequently painted by the impressionists. In this section of the exhibition, pictures of the station by several artists are grouped around Manet's masterpiece, The Gare Saint-Lazare, from the National Gallery's collection. Also included are images of the same station by Monet, Caillebotte, Goeneutte, Daumier, Forain, and Vuillard, which capture the dynamism and visual excitement of this symbol of early modernism.

In the mid-nineteenth century, trains brought wealthy vacationers on holiday from Paris and other cities to the beaches of Normandy, such as Boulogne, Deauville, and



Trouville. Manet's On the Beach at Boulogne, lent by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, demonstrates his choice of an informal and seemingly unstructured composition in representing people strolling or sitting on the beach. Bathing Time at Deauville, also in the exhibition, is one of Eugène Boudin's many pictures in which his fresh color and lightness of touch appropriately echo the informal, lighthearted ambiance of the seaside.

Another popular diversion of the period was the café; by the mid-nineteenth century it had become a popular meeting place for social and cultural exchange and an escape for many from crowded urban quarters. The impressionist painters frequented certain cafés and often painted the people and entertainers they observed there.

Some of Manet's café pictures, lent by the Louvre, the Art Institute of Chicago, and other major institutions, show crowds of people drinking, smoking, and enjoying the entertainment. But The Plum, from the National Gallery's collection, depicts a dejected prostitute sitting alone in a café with a brandied plum, a popular refreshment of the day, before her. Café pictures by Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Bonvin complete this section.

The exhibition is being organized by Theodore Reff, Professor of Art History, Columbia University, and author of Manet: Olympia and many articles on Manet, Degas, and other impressionist artists. He has been aided by David Rust,



curator, French painting, National Gallery, with the assistance of Florence Coman, research assistant. Accompanying the exhibition is a fully illustrated, scholarly catalogue by Mr. Reff. It will contain 100 principal illustrations and 130 comparative illustrations.

The exhibition is being installed by Mark Leithauser and Gaillard Ravenel, Chief of the Gallery's Department of Design and Installation, in consultation with Mr. Reff and the Gallery's Department of French Painting.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director (Information Officer), or Carolyn Engel Amiot, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, (202) 842-6353.